

Flora of the Indian Desert by M. M. Bhandari. Scientific Publishers, Jodhpur. 18 × 24.5 cm, i-viii, 1-472, 1978. Price Rs. 175.00 or U.S. \$ 35.

Flora of any State, region or district in our country is a welcome addition to literature on taxonomy and floristics. The arid and semi-arid regions of India did not attract many explorers and authors in the present century. Enumerations of plants for small areas, particularly towns having Universities and Colleges were brought out by many authors.

The first flora of Rajasthan having keys and short descriptions was published by Puri *et al.* (1964). That work did not adequately meet the needs of students. The present work is based on author's close familiarity with the region and its flora and his own collections for about a decade. The flora covers an area of about 25000 sq. km and deals with 82 families, 319 genera and 592 species.

The floristic analysis in the introductory chapter and, in general, the keys and descriptions are good.

There are some inconsistencies in citation of references and synonyms. Generic synonyms are mentioned for some (e.g. *Ctenolepis*, *Corbichonia*) and not for all.

The descriptions of species are generally good, but there is great variation in their size; several are quite brief, while others are too long (e.g. *Lepidagathis bandraensis* on p. 305).

Illustrations do not match the overall good standard of text; better and fuller illustrations could be expected at least for new taxa (e.g. p. 74). Absence of scale in illustrations is a significant lacuna (e.g. size of seed and leaf in Fig. 53, or of ovary and petal in Fig. 58 are misleading).

Despite an errata on the last page, many spelling (or printing) errors are seen.

Some inconsistencies and errors in nomenclature have crept in e.g. the name *Pavonia patens* in key (p. 68) but *P. procumbens* in text. *Cyperus aristatus* appears in key (p. 364) but not in text, except as a synonym on p. 376 under a different genus.

The authors of large floras involving several hundred species are sometimes helpless. Name-changes come to the notice of authors at last stage, and to incorporate a correction during final stages of typing or printing at ALL relevant places is difficult and if earlier formats are already printed, impossible.

But for a few shortcomings, this work on the flora of the Indian desertic region in Rajasthan will be found very useful in identification of plants of large region in the plains of our country.

The price of the book is very high for teachers and students to afford a personal copy.

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